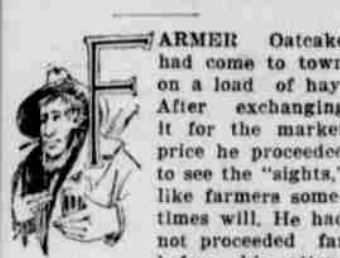




OATCAKE'S APRIL 1.



FARMER Oatcake had come to town on a load of hay. After exchanging it for the market price he proceeded to see the "sights," like farmers sometimes will. He had not proceeded far before his attention was attracted by a huge box on top of which was a bird sign, which read as follows:

LOOK OUT FOR THE BEAR.
Of course Mr. Oatcake could not resist the temptation of taking a squint at him, so he ambled up to the box rather nervously and peeped through the bars that had been nailed across the top to keep Mr. Bear safe. Finding that the box was empty Mr. Oatcake began to scratch his head. How had the bear got out? Then someone yelled April fool. Mr. Oatcake allowed that it was a good one.

Later in the day Mr. Oatcake took in the dime museum. He interviewed the fat girl, talked populum with the bearded lady, visited the chamber of horrors, and had enjoyed himself generally when he saw the following sign:

SEE THE GREAT RED BAY.
Draw Back the Curtain.
He drew back the curtain. Then he saw a big red brick and turned a double somersault in his haste to get away. He hadn't counted on being April-fooled twice in one day.

After leaving the museum Mr. Oatcake thought he would take a drink or two, and at once proceeded to a convenient liquor dispensary. "I'll take a beer," he said, putting a nickel on the bar. "been April-fooled twice and have concluded to drown my feelings." He was just the individual that the bartender with the decoy beer glass was looking for. It was produced in short order, and Mr. Oatcake showed himself to be rather an adept at the art of blowing off the foam. Then he expanded his capacious maw, preparatory to taking a gulp. But it wouldn't gulp worth a cent if it was only an artificially colored glass with real foam. Farmer Oatcake concluded that he had better hitch up and start home. Nearing a railway grade crossing within the city limits he saw a man frantically waving a red flag and telling him to stop.

"No yer don't, yer got darned flannel-mouthed son-of-a-gun; I've been fooled three times already," and he plied the whip with effect. In another instant Mr. Oatcake and his outfit were taking a ride on the cowcatcher of the engine.

TURNED A DOUBLE SOMERSET.
Fortunately he was not badly hurt, but the approach of April 1 always causes him to shudder.

Why the Gators Were Not There.
An American naval officer, wishing to bathe in a Ceylon river, asked a native to show him a place where there were no alligators. The native took him to a pool close to the estuary. The officer enjoyed his dip; while drying himself he asked his guide why there were never any alligators in that pool. "Because, sah," the Cingalese replied, "they plenty 'fraid of shark."

They have a brand of whisky in San Antonio called the "Horn of Plenty" because it will corn you copiously.—Texas Sifter.

THE THREE MISS BROWNS.

Their Wonderful Present and What Came of It.

Bang! bang! went the door bell. It rang fearfully.

"Betty," said the boarding-house mistress, "go out and see who that giant is that is trying to break the door bell."

The door bell jingled and rattled and rang! Betty tripped downstairs and opened the door.

A district messenger, three feet high, stood on the doorstep, smoking a powerful cigarette. Now and again a cloud of smoke hid him from view.

The small messenger held his cigarette lightly and gracefully in the air and said:

"Here's a box for Miss Brown. There is 25 cents due on it."

Betty paid the money and took the box.

Then he shot down the steps like a meteor and actually ran to a cigar store on the corner after another package of cigarettes.

"Miss Brown!" called Betty from the hallway, "here is a box for you!"

Three pretty young ladies answered the call, for it happened there were three Miss Browns in the boarding-house.

"Which Miss Brown?" asked each in chorus.

"There is no first name," said Betty; "only Miss Brown."

The three fair Miss Browns looked at the box in a brown study. It was certainly meant for a Miss Brown in their boarding-house, for the number had been written in large numbers on the box lid.

The Miss Browns agreed that they would open the box and if there was nothing in it to indicate which of them the box was intended for they would divide its contents.

The three Miss Browns opened the box with gleeful faces and great expectations.

There was nothing in it but a brick. The day was April 1.

A DREADFUL DAY.

The Quick-Tempered Father and His Darling Little Boy.

The father had been out late the night before, "working on the books at the office," you know, and when he sat down to breakfast with his wife and Willie, rosy-cheeked, mischievous, and lovable Willie, their only child, he was not in good humor.

He found fault because the coffee had cooled (while breakfast was waiting for him), he grumbled because his eggs were too hard boiled, and he made his wife and child as miserable as he himself was.

The climax of his ugliness was reached when for some fancied sin on Willie's part he rushed the boy into the parlor and gave him a sound thrashing.

When breakfast was resumed it was eaten in silence except for the child's half-choked sobs.

The father was sorry for what he had done. He had a nervous temperament. He did not stop to smoke his usual morning pipe, but hurried away. As he reached the door Willie came up to him with upturned face and said:

"Willie wants to kiss papa. Willie loves papa."

The father's heart was touched and he regretted his actions. Riding downtown in the train he read in his morning paper of the death of a little boy by being run over while at play by a passing truck. He imagined the scene, and it was impressed upon his mind. Then his mind ran on with strange imaginings. What if his boy should be killed? What if when he arrived home at night Willie should be dead—dead before he could tell his boy how much he loved him, and how sorry he was for his cruel conduct.

Of course there was not one chance in a million of his losing his child; but then! there was that one chance. The idea soon developed into a presentiment that haunted him all day. He performed his duties in a mechanical manner, while picturing a white casket, and a chubby little face cold in death. By night he had worked himself into a terrible mental condition. He left the "L" train and walked with nervous steps toward home.

Willie was not playing in front of the house as usual. The father missed the usual kiss and "Hello, papa! I'm glad you've come."

He ascended the steps. He saw white craps on the door bell. He reeled and gasped for breath, and saw nothing but mist. Then recovering himself, he opened the door, and with moist eyes entered the house.

"What was it he saw? Was it Willie? Yes, it was his little son who merrily shouted:

"April Fool, papa; April Fool!" And papa didn't do a thing to Willie.—S. R. Egor in New York World.

SHE DID IT.

What He Was Sent For, Though Not What He Expected.

He was young and enthusiastic, and he loved her to distraction.

"If I could but serve you," he said to the object of his adoration. "I would indeed be the happiest of mortals. Command me."

And the damsel blushed and said she would.

"Stay here a moment and I will give you a note to take to a friend. You will bring back a package," and she smiled, oh! so sweetly, as she glided from the room.

She returned in a few moments and handed him the precious message. Away he flew. Distance was no object to him. He reached his destination. The letter was opened and returned with the remark that the package he was to fetch was at another remote part of the town.

He flew there, only to be referred to the sergeant of police, at the nearest station. The sergeant read the message and directed him to another official, who in his turn sent the young man four miles out of the city. But the elusive package was not to be found.

One sent him to Brooklyn, another to Jersey City, until at length, weary, footsore and unable to go further, he sunk upon a doorstep and tearing open the missive read these words:

"Send the fool further."

The dawn of April 2 was breaking.—New York Journal.

A Good One on Mr. Blank.

The best April-fool joke of recent times was played on a Chicago commission merchant a few years ago. Chicago commission merchants are not always good natured and Mr. Blank was no exception to the rule. In fact, he was unusually gruff, and was never known to take a joke as such. That is probably the reason that he was a favorite mark for the practical joker.

On March 31 one of his friends caused the following ad to appear in the columns of a Chicago paper the following morning:

Wanted—Fifty Maltese cats at once. Highest prices paid. Bring them along. Blank, Commission Merchant, —S. Water street.

When Mr. Blank arrived at his store he was surprised to see a line of boys in front of his store each with a cat under his arm. When he learned what it was all about he became a veritable madman. It was many weeks before he recovered his composure.

April Fool's Day in Africa.



Missionary—Did you notice which way my colleague went?
Cannibal—He just passed down five minutes ago.

Folly am I:
This is my day.

The old, the young,
The grave, the gay,
Abide awhile with me to cheer
The world's dull, humdrum way.

The richest man,
The proudest girl;
The polished wit,
The heavy churl
Are caught off guard and jostled much
In folly's merry whirl.

No harm is meant;
All's but for fun;
And when the day
Its course has run,
Whoever's done the mischief gay
Have all themselves been "done."

A Future Convenience.

Diggles had been working hard for a long time with a refractory heating apparatus. He came out of the basement with blue fingers and a red nose, and an expression of repressed emotion on his face.

"Maria," he said, "there's one comfort about it."

"What is it?"

"We needn't worry about ice next summer. I think I have struck a plan that's entirely reliable. If we want to get anything good and cold we'll take it down and put it into that heating apparatus. Only we must be careful not to leave it too long, or it'll freeze."

—Cincinnati Commercial-Gazette.

Harder to Get At.

"I suppose that it would take a great deal of observation and experience to enable a man to pick the fastest horse entered for a race," she remarked.

"Yes," replied the man of mournful experience; "but that isn't what you are trying to do. What you want is to pick the horse that is going to win."

—Washington Star.

IN MY LADY'S CORNER.

INTERESTING READING FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS.

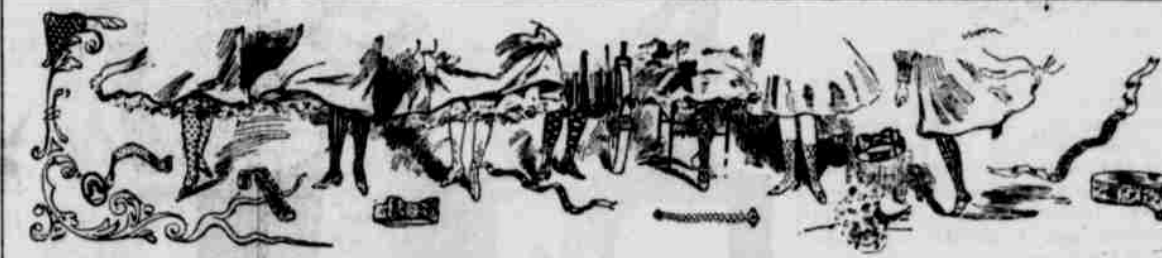
Current Notes of the Modes and Pictures of Feminine Attire—The Craze for Belts—A Countess' Exploit—Some Timely Recipes.



HE stores them once more with buyers! Now, however, they are not in search of gifts, but bargains. And the bargains are to be had. Silks can be bought at half-price and the wise woman lays in a stock for next summer. Now, too, is a good opportunity to buy school dresses for the little ones.

Those bought for them at the beginning of the term are rather shabby and new ones must be secured. Rough goods, boucles, camel's hair, chevrons, are best for cold days and should be of some bright coloring. These dresses are oftentimes trimmed with fur, while no gown is complete without a bit of velvet somewhere about it.

A frock for a girl of 7, of red and brown boucle, has a plain, full skirt.



The yoke is of red velvet and the boucle house beneath it has a band of red velvet down the center of the front and back. On these bands are double rows of tiny pearl buttons. The large puffed sleeves have revers of boucle falling over them. Alaska sable edges the revers and a velvet belt encircles the waist.

Another frock for an older girl, is of a blue and cream mixed goods. The skirt is plain, as in the other dress, and the round waist is tight-fitting. Two

English meaning a "lady lion tamer," and this extraordinary performance is to be for the benefit of the sick soldiers who have survived the Madagascar expedition. It is by no means certain, however, that she will be able to make this unique trip. A few nights ago she had a dangerous adventure in her wild beast cage. She had scarcely closed the door when Tzar, the most savage and ferocious lion of the lot, sprang at her and clawed her in the breast and arms. A panic ensued in

the menagerie, and a rush was made for the entrance, but the brave countess stood her ground unflinching and managed to beat the lion off. Then she straightened herself up and made Tzar go through his usual performance. The panic was allayed and the spectators began to wildly applaud the courageous woman. Undissuaded by this adventure she insists that she will give her balloon performance at an early date with the same lion that attacked her. Yet she is but a new hand at lion taming. She began to exhibit herself with wild animals in a Parisian music hall, and went from there to Lyons, thence to Marseilles. She is not appearing under her family name.



slashes in the front of the waist reveal cream silk and blue velvet forms collar and belt.—The Latest, in Chicago News.

Current Craze for Belts.

To Yvette Guilbert we owe the present craze for metal belts and feminine



harness of all descriptions, combining all the glitter and splendor of the orient. Here the tall, slender, willowy girl considers herself decidedly at an advantage, but in the general opinion she is not half so fascinating as the petite, round-waisted girl, with her pretty waist caught around with a narrow, glittering belt. This "harness" fad has



row belt of black encircles the waist. The sleeves are mandolin shaped like the bodice, from shoulder to elbow, to show an under part of black satin. Chinchilla edges the wrists. A small cape collar, of prune cloth, edged with fur, flares jauntily about the throat, which is finished by an unusually high stock collar, edged with narrow fur.

High-Backed Chairs.
There is a craze for big, high-backed chairs that were fashionable in England long ago. They do not show any woodwork. They can scarcely be called graceful, but the lines are said to be

taken deep root as an evening gown adjunct, and a very fetching finish they make usually.

A chic, fairy-like frock for a young debutante, which she is to wear at a big social function in Washington, whether the family are going for the season's gaiety, was seen several days ago. The skirt was simply and severely made of crisp white satin, run through with dull blue stripes, which shone through the gauzy overskirt of sheeny white mousseline de sole, laid smoothly over it from waist to foot, where it was finished by a deep hem-stitched hem. There was a tiny baby blouse, with the mousseline de sole pouncing freely over a broad belt of fligree gold which encircled the waist. It was cut in a square fashion about the shoulders and finished by a "harness" of turquoise, pearls, and gold, fitting smoothly over the shoulders and falling down to the waist in loose, tab ends. The sleeves are baby puffs of plain dull-blue satin, covered over with mousseline de sole, thickly studded with gold-rimmed turquoise. Altogether it was a simple, girlish frock, but wonderfully lovely.

A Countess' Exploit.
A young and attractive woman in Paris, who is said to be a countess, proposes to go from Marseilles to Paris in a balloon with a lion as her companion. She is what they call in France a "domptesse," this translated into

good. Best of all, they are extremely comfortable. High-backed chairs are becoming, a fact which has done much toward making them popular. Carvings in woods or gilt and rich brocade throw out into greater evidence a handsome toilet, and it is funny to see how some women know this and pose accordingly.

Timely Recipes.

Hominy pudding—Two cupsful of cold boiled hominy, two tablespoonfuls of melted butter, three well-beaten eggs and one cup of sweet milk. Mix thoroughly, season to taste and bake in a buttered pan for one-half hour. This pudding may be served with the meat course at dinner.

Bread pudding—Slice a loaf of stale bread, spread with butter; put a layer in the bottom of a deep baking dish; cover with stoned raisins and sliced citron. Put in another layer of bread and fruit. Beat four eggs with one-half cupful of sugar; add two pints of milk. Flavor with nutmeg and pour over the pudding. Serve with rich sauce.

Mrs. Cornelia K.—Have you ever tried potato soufflé? If you want a dainty breakfast dish take potatoes that have been freshly baked and cut off the top; scrape out the meaty inside and having beaten them with a little cream, butter, pepper and salt, put the mixture back into the jackets, piling high over the edges. Put it into the oven and bake it a light brown.

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HUMORIST'S CORNER.

SOME PLEASANT PARAGRAPHS FOR LEAN READERS.

"Listen to the Coming Woman"—The Self-Closing Door—Practice Makes Perfect, or, How Brother Holdemapp succeeded as a Church Collector.



Room is what the women lack; Room to move and turn around in; For the bustle's coming back.

Elevate your frescoed ceilings; Raise your roofs nearer the sky; For next summer's style of coiffure Will be over three feet high.

A Dime Novellet.

CHAPTER I.

CHAPTER II.

Another step and Dick Hovey would have been a dead man. Perhaps. "Trow up yer han's."

Dick Hovey's hands went up. As they did so a dozen bandits sprang from their concealment and surrounded him.

CHAPTER III.

"Really, gentlemen," said he, good-naturedly, "you almost surprised me; I wasn't looking for an audience way out here; deed I wasn't. But I am pleased, gentlemen, more than pleased. Your very looks denote your intelligence, and an intelligent crowd is the crowd I like to meet. All joking aside, boys, it would be impossible to find your equal this side of the Rockies, and right here I'm going to put my statement to test. Step forward, gent, and let me show you this little—"

"Hol' on dere, keep dem han's up!" commanded the wily leader. And Dick Hovey, simple, harmless Dick Hovey, obeyed.

CHAPTER IV.

Again the stillness was broken by Dick Hovey's voice.

"Oh, certainly, gentlemen, if you wish it. But dead straight, now, I have a little article here that is bound to interest you all. Its equal has never been known. Step up, boys, and see for yourselves. Take them from my pockets if you will. They won't hurt you; they won't bite you. Warranted not to kick, bite, break or go off half-cocked. Here you are, boys, just one apiece. I've got just an even dozen. There, you wind it up so, and it goes off so. Hear that! Ain't it beautiful? And only twenty-five cents apiece."

CHAPTER V.

Every bandit dropped his rifle and took one of the toys. They were intensely amusing and had never before been seen in the mountains.

"Now," said Dick, "connect them all together and we have a miniature brass band. Here," to the leader, "connect yours to mine and the music plays thus!"

CHAPTER VI.

The very instant the connection was made every outlaw fell senseless in his tracks.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Gen. Ulysses McClellan Traller, the great government deputy, alias Dick Hovey.

"Ha, ha, ha!" he repeated, "electricity fetches 'em when rifle balls would only make 'em laugh."

CHAPTER VII.

Three pistol shots in rapid succession brought a dozen assisting deputies with horses from the pass below, and as the last rays of the sun were kissing the mountain peaks good-by twelve of the worst moonshiners in Deathtrap Lodge were safely landed in the county jail.

CHAPTER VIII.

A month later a banquet was held in Washington in honor of the great Gen. U. M. Traller, government detective. It was a grand affair. All the high ladies of the land worshipped at his spurred feet, and now it is whispered that he is about to make a highly successful entry upon the dramatic stage. (The End.)

Practice Makes Perfect.

The Parson—Bless me! who took up the collection to-day? It is the most successful of the season.

The Deacon—O, don't be bashful, Bill; our dear Brother Holdemapp, the converted road agent, passed the basket to-day.

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